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## Wolf That I Am: in Search of the Red Earth People

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## Book Reviews

Although Prucha used a variety of sources, his principal ones were printed documents from the executive branch and Congress. The orientation of *The Great Father* is, therefore, predominantly that of Washington, D.C., reflecting the growth, development, and continuity of Indian policy rather than its day-to-day application at the individual agencies. Certain readers may question the author's reluctance to treat more fully the effects of those policies on Indian communities. Prucha would deny timidity and assert instead that to write a history of Indian responses to federal policies—considering the great diversity of Indian groups, let alone individual responses within those groups—would have required at least another lifetime of study. The author justifies his approach by explaining that, regardless of opinion or orientation, the policies and programs of the United States have had a determining influence on the history of Indian tribes and should therefore be studied in detail.

*The Great Father* is handsomely illustrated with many previously unpublished photographs. Readers would also be particularly pleased that Prucha insisted that footnotes should accompany the text. Aside from their convenient placement, the notes are unrivaled for their breadth; they complement and, in many instances, amplify the text with critical comments on the literature. Readers offended by Prucha's scrupulously objective tone and cool style will nevertheless find ample references to dissenting viewpoints. Four appendixes contain a list of presidents, their secretaries of the interior, and their commissioners of Indian affairs; Indian population; federal recognition of tribal groups in the United States as of 1980; and the nomenclature of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Finally, a bibliographical essay will serve scholars for years to come.

*The Great Father* is an important work. In a less expensive paper-bound edition or in an abridged single-volume edition, it should achieve the wider audience it deserves. The work is of such consistent high quality, it comes as no surprise that the Organization of American Historians in April 1985 awarded it the Ray Allen Billington Prize.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

L. G. MOSES

*Wolf That I Am: In Search of the Red Earth People*, by Fred McTaggart. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984. xix, 201 pp. Index. \$7.95.

*Wolf That I Am* is a paperback edition of a book first published in 1976. Except for a new foreword by William T. Hagan, the book is unchanged from the original. It is worth reviewing again, however, because it is important for Iowa readers. In the late 1960s, Fred McTaggart was a grad-

uate student at the University of Iowa. His plan for a Ph.D. dissertation for the English department was to collect stories (oral traditional literature) at the Mesquakie settlement in Tama County for analysis and interpretation according to the best methodology of folklorists. Armed with the names of some people who might talk to him, McTaggart showed up on a fall day in 1970 with high hopes, a funny feeling in the pit of his stomach, and a tape recorder. This book is the story of what the Mesquakies taught him during the dozens of visits he made to their community in the winter of 1970-1971.

I suspect that in one sense McTaggart's experience was not unique. By the thousands, folklorists, anthropologists, and other students and scholars have descended on Native American communities across the country to record their doings for later study and publication. I also suspect that their experiences as observers and collectors are never what they expected when they set out, but they do the best they can and if anything "useful" comes from their field experience they hurry home at the end of their stay to write it up for their fellow scholars. The libraries are filled with such studies, and among the contemporary native groups subjected to such scrutiny the Mesquakies have been blessed, or cursed, with far more than their share of observers. As McTaggart discovered, the Mesquakies still tell Truman Michelson stories and he did his field work before World War I.

The Mesquakies did not give McTaggart much oral traditional literature. They gave him a sense of himself, however, and that is largely what this book is about—how they taught him who he was. In the process, of course, they also taught him something about who they were, but that lesson came in unexpected ways that could have been lost on someone less sensitive. This is what is especially good about the book. In his "Search for the Red Earth People," McTaggart found and nourished a sensitivity in himself that is fascinating and refreshing. He was like the wolf in one of the stories. A raccoon had smeared dung in the wolf's eyes, blinding him, and the wolf staggered about asking everyone nearby for directions. The directions were never quite appropriate, however, and the wolf ended up over his head in a river. The story did not reveal if the wolf sank or survived. McTaggart survived because he did what the wolf did not do—he cleaned the dung from his eyes.

This book is not only about McTaggart's personal journey from innocence to self knowledge, however. There are a few Mesquakie stories here and McTaggart's interpretation of them, always closely related to his own experiences with the Mesquakies, are delightful. In addition, there are valuable snippets of Mesquakie history. Finally, as McTaggart tells how he learned about himself he inevitably tells how the Mesquakies taught him. Their teaching, sometimes subtle, sometimes

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direct, is another reason why anybody headed for a field experience in a native community should read this book. Getting a sense of what and how the Mesquakies taught McTaggart will help them understand what is in store for them. Such a lesson, indeed, would be good for all of us who come into contact with people of cultures different from our own. But all of this is really frosting on the cake, because *Wolf That I Am* is, quite simply, one of the most enjoyable books I have ever read—it was better this time than the last. I am glad it is in paperback and I hope that everyone who missed it eleven years ago will rush out and buy it now. They will learn a lot and the learning will be fun.

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

MICHAEL D. GREEN

*Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, by James P. Ronda. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. xvii, 310 pp. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, appendix, index, maps. \$24.95 cloth.

James P. Ronda's *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* is a marvelous book on a subject that many historians might think had been worked to death. After all, how many books on Lewis and Clark are really needed? The intrepid explorers, Sacagawea, and the continental crossing are well known in history, folklore, and myth. *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* may not be the last book about the Corps of Discovery, but it is surely one of the best because Ronda provides a new understanding of the famed expedition.

The book follows the essential chronology of the Lewis and Clark expedition, but Ronda focuses on Indian relations and ethnohistory to reinterpret the journey as an event in frontier history, and to explain its significance in Native American history. Indians were calculated to be a major part of the expedition's concerns from the time that Jefferson conceived it. The president directed Lewis and Clark to collect information about the native people and to explain that the United States had become sovereign in the Louisiana Territory. The expedition was to promote peace among warring tribes while laying the groundwork for the American fur trade. These goals proved to be elusive because the explorers did not understand the dynamics of tribal relations in the Missouri River region. Frequently Lewis and Clark believed that they had established a peace between warring tribes only to learn that they had really sowed the seeds of future enmity. For example, Lewis's announcement of the advent of the St. Louis-based fur trade alarmed the Blackfeet because American traders would arm potential enemies. Formerly the Blackfeet had been able to dominate the upper reaches of the Missouri with guns

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